

OFFICIAL REPORTS OF SOCIETIES

IN CHARGE OF
MARY E. THORNTON

FINAL REPORT

THE Committee to Secure by Act of Congress the Employment of Graduate Women Nurses in the Hospital Service of the United States Army makes the following final report:

"On February 8, 1901, a meeting of the committee was held at the house of Miss Chanler, the following members of the General Committee being present: Mrs. Joseph Hobson, chairman; Miss Margaret Livingston Chanler, secretary; Mrs. W. S. Cowles, Mrs. Joseph R. Hawley, Mrs. Amos G. Draper.

"The secretary reported that Section 19 of the Army Reorganization Bill had passed successively through the Senate committee, the Senate and the House, the House committee, and the Conference Committees of both the Senate and the House. Further, that the bill having on February 2, 1901, been signed by President McKinley, an Act of Congress had secured the permanent employment of graduate women nurses in the hospital service of the United States Army.

"The secretary then read Section 19, which is as follows:

"SECTION 19. That the Nurse Corps (female) shall consist of one Superintendent, to be appointed by the Secretary of War, who shall be a graduate of a hospital training-school having a course of instruction of not less than two years, whose term of office may be terminated at his discretion, whose compensation shall be one thousand eight hundred dollars per annum, and of as many chief nurses, nurses, and reserve nurses as may be needed. Reserve nurses may be assigned to active duty when the emergency of the service demands, but shall receive no compensation except when on such duty; *Provided*, That all nurses in the Nurse Corps shall be appointed or removed by the Surgeon-General with the approval of the Secretary of War; that they shall be graduates of hospital training-schools, and shall have passed a satisfactory professional, moral, mental, and physical examination: *And Provided*, That the Superintendent and nurses shall receive transportation and necessary expenses when travelling under orders; that the pay and allowance of nurses and of reserve nurses when on active service shall be forty dollars per month when on duty in the United States and

fifty dollars per month when without the limits of the United States. They shall be entitled to quarters, subsistence, and medical attendance during illness, and they may be granted leaves of absence for thirty days, with pay, for each calendar year; and, when serving as chief nurses, their pay may be increased by authority of the Secretary of War, such increase not to exceed twenty-five dollars per month. Payments to the Nurse Corps shall be made by the Pay Department.*

"The first business before the committee was the framing of the following letter, which the secretary was asked to send to Senator Proctor, Senator Hawley, and Mr. Hull:

"DEAR SIR: Now that the President has signed the Army Reorganization Bill, and the *Committee to Secure by Act of Congress the Employment of Graduate Women Nurses in the Hospital Service of the United States Army* is about to resign, I, as secretary, have been directed to thank you for all the support and encouragement which you have given to the committee.

"That you believed in female army nurses was an inestimable help to us at the beginning of our work, but we could not foresee how often we should have to ask your advice nor how much harder our task would have been without it.

"There is now no reason why the best trained nurses should not enter our army hospitals, thereby lessening the time spent away from his company by every sick soldier within their reach.

"This legislation is equally an honor to the nursing service and a benefit to the army. All those who are to profit by it, together with all who have labored in its behalf, owe you their gratitude.

"I have the honor to be,

"Faithfully yours,

"MARGARET LIVINGSTON CHANLER,

"Secretary."

"It was also arranged that Mrs. Hobson should personally thank all who had in any way helped by their advice and interest, and that Miss Chanler should send an informal letter to Mr. McCammon, whose assistance had been so consistent during the winter of 1900.

"Miss Chanler reported several letters from Miss Schuyler, conveying her assurances of continued interest in the measure, and the following list of those to whom copies of the bill should be sent was read: Mrs. W. N. Armstrong, Hampton, Virginia; Mrs. Harriet Blaine Beale, Washington, D. C.; Miss Margaret Livingston Chanler, Wash-

* This bill was also printed in the March number.

ington, D. C.; Mrs. Winthrop Cowdin, Mt. Kisco, New York; Mrs. W. S. Cowles, Washington, D. C.; Mrs. W. Bayard Cutting, New York; Mrs. Amos G. Draper, Washington, D. C.; Miss Laura D. Gill, Northampton, Massachusetts; Mrs. Joseph R. Hawley, Washington, D. C.; Mrs. Joseph Hobson, Washington, D. C.; Mrs. John A. T. Hull, Washington, D. C.; Miss A. C. Maxwell, New York City; Miss C. K. Meredith, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Miss M. S. Nutting, Baltimore, Maryland; Mrs. Whitelaw Reid, New York City; Mrs. W. H. Osborn, New York City; Miss Linda Richards, Taunton, Massachusetts; Mrs. Hunter Robb, Cleveland, Ohio; Miss L. L. Schuyler, New York City; Miss Irene Sutcliffe, New York City.

"Miss Chanler, as treasurer, then reported a balance of seventy-seven dollars and eighty-nine cents, received from Miss Wadley, the former treasurer, and the committee directed that when Miss Chanler should have defrayed all expenses connected with her office of secretary, the remainder of these funds should be sent to the Chief Army Nurse in Manila, Miss Chanler reporting that the amount would procure a number of drives on the Lunetta for nurses who are in need of them.

"The committee next discussed the spring meeting, and unanimously decided that there was no business to come before any such meeting, and that its purpose would be amply effected by sending this final report to absent members of the committee, together with the information that Mrs. Dita Kinney, a graduate of the Training-School of the Massachusetts General Hospital, who has been superintendent of nurses in that hospital, and who has served at the Presidio and in New Mexico, was appointed, on December 1, 1900, Superintendent of Trained Nurses in the Surgeon-General's office.

"Believing that the work which the original members of this committee undertook, and in large measure accomplished, is now entirely concluded, the committee voted to adjourn *sine die*."

THE CONGRESS OF NURSES

THE work of correspondence for arranging for the programme of papers to be read at the Congress of Nurses next September is being carried on by the secretary, Miss Banfield, and encouraging replies are being received, expressing interest and promising support. A number of associations have promised to send delegates, and among these the first reply received from our home contingent was a most cordial response from Dr. McGee, promising a delegate from the Spanish-American War Nurses, and the first acceptance from abroad was from the League of St. Bartholomew's Nurses.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN

MRS. KATE WALLER BARRETT, M.D., D.Sc., of Washington, the corresponding secretary of the National Council of Women of the United States, writes that the annual executive meeting of the council will be held in Buffalo this summer, probably on September 11, 12, 13, and 14, and that they hope to meet the officers of the American Federation of Graduate Nurses at that time.

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES

MISS KRUYSE, matron and superintendent of nurses at the Wilhelmina Hospital at Amsterdam, Holland, has accepted the office of honorary vice-president of the International Council. She is not sure of being able to come to America for the meetings to be held during Congress week, but will doubtless be able to be present at the Berlin meeting in 1904.

Mrs. Tscherning, the president of the Danish Council of Nurses, writes most courteously of her interest in the advancing organization of nurses, but thinks that financial reasons and the fact that the Danish Council is still very young will prevent it from coming into full union with the International Council at this time: no doubt they also will feel better prepared to enter at the quinquennial in Berlin. For these reasons they do not now expect to be represented here at the September meeting in Buffalo.

Miss McGahey, matron and superintendent of nurses in the Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, New South Wales, has accepted the office of honorary vice-president of the International Council, and will be present at its meeting in September.

NEW ENGLAND HOSPITAL ALUMNÆ

THE Alumnæ Association of the New England Hospital Training-School for Women and Children met at 206 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts, on Saturday afternoon, January 12, at three P.M.

Miss Richards, the president, was unable to be present, owing to a recent indisposition. The meeting assumed a very informal character. In the absence of Miss Dillet, Miss Bertha E. Griffin, assistant secretary, assumed her duties.

Miss Miriam B. McIntosh, ex-chief nurse of the Military Hospital, Santiago de Cuba, read a report on the ways and means of establishing a club-house with a registry combined.

It was then unanimously voted by those present that the monthly meetings be continued until the year ending June, viz., holding every other meeting at the hospital and every alternate one in town. This then would give those out of town the benefit of the city meetings and those in the hospital district the benefit of the hospital meetings.

STUDY COURSE IN THE ASSOCIATED ALUMNÆ

ON another page will be found a sketch of the visit made to the Manhattan State Hospital on Ward's Island. It will be of added interest this month when considered in connection with Miss Laird's paper upon the "Work of Nurses in Asylums." It is a matter for self-congratulation on the part of those who were able to accept the invitation so courteously extended the members of the Associated Alumnæ by Dr. A. E. MacDonald and Dr. E. C. Dent.

BROOKLYN HOMŒOPATHIC ALUMNÆ

"THE city having bought the Brooklyn Homœopathic Hospital for the purpose of making it a Charity Hospital, we, the members of the alumnæ, suddenly realized that should we be taken sick we had no hospital home in which to be cared for.

The Executive Committee called a meeting to consider the matter. It was decided to apply to the Memorial Homœopathic Hospital of Brooklyn, and state the matter to them.

The Board of Managers of said hospital, through their president, Mrs. John Burtis, "consented to our furnishing a room, all medical attendance and nursing to be given free, only a very small fee to be charged for board per week paid by the sick nurse."

We gladly accepted the offer and have furnished a room. It is comfortably and prettily furnished, and has two windows, one having a westerly view. Books have been donated by two of our nurses, and we hope that others will follow their example in the way of decorations.

Each member of the alumnæ was taxed a small sum, and all have responded most heartily. Only members of the alumnæ are eligible to the room.

This is only a small beginning, but we hope in the future to make it an endowed room. We heartily appreciate the sisterly feeling shown by the Board of Managers of the Memorial Homœopathic Hospital of Brooklyn.

THE annual meeting of the Buffalo Nurses' Association was held Monday, March 4, following the regular monthly meeting.

Interesting reports were given by the secretary and treasurer, and the following officers were elected:

President, Miss Damer; first vice-president, Mrs. Morley; second vice-president, Miss Simpson; recording secretary, Miss Snetzinger; corresponding secretary, Miss McKinnon; treasurer, Miss Keating; directors—Miss Owen, Miss Drake, Miss Ames; trustee for three years, Mrs. Storch. Miss Damer was appointed delegate to the State meeting to be held in Albany.

A social time followed. Refreshments were served by Mrs. Morley and Miss Simpson.

The polls were closed at five o'clock, after which the tellers announced the results of the election.

THE CITY OF BOSTON HOSPITAL ALUMNÆ

THE City of Boston Almshouse Hospital Training-School for Nurses, which was organized four years ago and has graduated twenty-nine nurses, organized an *alumnæ* association on March 14. Fifteen nurses joined. Meetings are to be held once in three months. It is now six years since it was organized as a school for nurse-attendants with a one-year course. That was frowned upon by other schools, and four years ago it was reorganized as a training-school for nurses with a two-years' course and instruction like that of any other well-regulated training-school. The hospital (nearly always full) accommodates about three hundred and fifty patients and has medical, surgical, and obstetrical departments. The patients are of the same class as those at the New York City Hospital, Blackwell's Island. The training-school numbers about thirty-five nurses.

ORANGE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL ALUMNÆ

A REGULAR meeting of the Orange *Alumnæ* Association was held January 16 at 475 Main Street, Orange. It was announced that this *alumnæ* had been accepted for membership in the Associated *Alumnæ* of Trained Nurses of the United States, and it was resolved to send a delegate, to be named later, to the Congress of Nurses to be held at Buffalo in September. Miss Mary Thornton had kindly taken time from other pressing engagements to address us on the subject of the society she represents, and in a very pleasing talk cleared up doubts and uncertainties that had vexed some minds on the desirability of joining another society, clearly showing the advantages to be gained by extending our interests and widening the circle through which wisdom may be received. We wish the Congress all manner of success.

That the invitation which was extended to us by the New York members of the Associated Alumnae to accompany them upon their visit to the Manhattan State Hospital on Ward's Island could be accepted by so few of us is to be regretted. The arrangements were made for us to meet at East One-Hundred-and-Sixteenth Street on Wednesday, February 27, at three o'clock. From two-thirty P.M. groups of nurses in twos and threes continued to arrive and were welcomed by the Post-Graduate Nurses, who were the hostesses of the occasion. As the hour drew near it was clear that the party was largely in excess of the number originally expected, and fully fifty stepped on board the small tug *Mermaid*, which conveyed us to the island. On the landing-stage two of the hospital doctors were waiting to receive us and escorted us first to the convalescent dormitories, as they may be styled, and our first thought was that we were being shown through very comfortable, not to say elegant, sanatorium quarters, as we passed between rows of enjoyable rocking-chairs interspersed with small tables, each covered with an embroidered cloth on which was placed a flowering plant, a bunch of dried grasses, or maybe a cluster of paper flowers, while the polished floors were covered with gay rugs and the spotted rag-mats. Everything, we were told, was the work of the patients. Every rocker had its pillow or head-rest of the prettiest silk in varied designs. In the sleeping dormitories we found only beds, as close as they could be placed, the white spreads pinned most exactly in every case, and, most unusual sight, at the head of each bed a pillow-sham more or less embroidered, the work of the better class of patients. It had a strange effect to those eyes used to the stern simplicity of an ordinary hospital-bed, but it had also a very humanizing aspect. The patients make their own beds, the nurses only doing the pinning. We passed from thence to the work-room, where we could see much of that we had just noticed in process of construction—many running the sewing machine, some weaving the mats on frames, others at work on the rag carpets, following designs, garments were being made, hair mattresses being picked over, and, in fact, occupation being found for all, with only two nurses to overlook the two rooms. Only one woman in this section showed any appreciable sign of her disease, and sat on her machine until a word from the nurse brought her to her seat. We then reached the kitchens, which were much as any such large institution would possess, except that now their head "chef" is a woman from some training institution in Philadelphia which has well fitted her for her position; she is giving every possible satisfaction in her study of the dietary, much as we have heard it spoken of by Miss Alline.

We visited the nurses' quarters where the two hundred nurses and

attendants who are attached to the hospital are cared for. The small rooms were very attractive, nearly all being single, but a few contained two beds; in all cases these were strong white enamel folding-beds, a curtain being drawn before them during the day.

The shoe-shop was an interesting feature. Shoes of every grade were being turned out and repaired. The tailor-shop adjoined, a high bench running the full length of the room beneath the windows accommodating a long row of cross-legged tailors. The laundry was specially interesting, the clothes being gotten up for every inmate of this vast establishment, which must number in round figures nearly two thousand persons, as there are nineteen hundred patients. All are assigned the work for which they seem most fitted. A number of young attendants in white and blue print gowns were here assisting with nurses in charge. There were two large mangles with heated cylinders, and in the next room the walls were lined with inverted drawers with handles to slide out; these were filled with bars on which were hung the clothes for drying by the hot pipes which are over and under these slides. The washing is all done by machinery by the men. The machine which extracted the water was the newest and most interesting piece, the clothes being packed closely round a hollow cylinder, leaving the centre space clear; the whole revolved rapidly, leaving the clothes ready for the drying rails.

It must be understood that all the departments mentioned were widely separated from one another, and on the way we would meet or see in the distance wards of patients walking by two and two with nurses at short intervals on either side. It looked very dreary work for the nurses, and it was a cold day too, but nothing, the doctors said, to the weather that sometimes had to be faced on that Island, and that the exercise obtained in going about their work was often all that they had, as visiting New York was not an easy matter, there being no regular service of boats, so excursions had to be duly planned for.

We were, of course, anxious to see some of the more afflicted class, and passed on to the hospital. All the arrangements seemed singularly bright and attractive; many of the beds being arranged in large bay-windows, introducing sunlight and air, but it was not thought best to disturb patients by speaking to them much, and the visits were very brief. In one small room we saw the only noisy woman; she was weeping stormily and tearing her hair. All who were up were either sewing or reading. The dining-room, through which we passed, looked like a summer resort with its numerous small tables to seat three or four, each with its spotless cloth and dainty Japanese napkins ready for the next meal; we felt like sitting down and looking for the menu card.

One very noticeable feature was the number of birds in single or large cages—a green Polly, love-birds, canaries, Java sparrows, and odd birds not so easily recognized,—and also the thriving condition of the plants, which were in every window and on every table, and looked is as good condition as did the patients. The sanitary arrangements were, of course, in all cases as fine as could be put up, the walls of the lavatories and bath-rooms being of marble. It was particularly mentioned that in no case was a straight-jacket used, moral influence being the force in vogue.

One of the last visits was to the oldest building, which contains the chapel, where a band plays three times a week, and is formed by the male attendants. The hall was full of men when we were there, evidently enjoying the performance; this and the ante-room are used for entertainments of various kinds. This brought us to the end of our tour of inspection, and much as we appreciated all we had seen, with all the kindness and courtesy that had been shown us, we felt as if we had walked miles and needed a rest. Doubtless many points have been forgotten or overlooked in this brief record of our visit, but the lasting impression left on our minds will be the absence of much we had expected to see and the unexpectedness of much we did see, and the last thing that was in evidence was the fact that it was an asylum for the insane that we had just been through. An industrial institution would contain in as many members as many eccentricities as those that we noticed that day.

With thanks to those who had accompanied us through that pleasant afternoon, we reëmbarked and dispersed to our several ways.

THE WORK OF NURSES IN ASYLUMS*

I FEEL a great hesitancy in addressing you to-day, because the topic given me is so important and far-reaching that I will be unable to give you but a mere glimpse of the multitudinous ways in which the work of nursing the insane differs from the work of caring for the general sick. But I hope this short paper will at least entertain you, and perhaps instil a little more interest and a kindlier feeling towards our cousin nurses, if I may so term them—the graduates of the State hospitals.

Many of us felt that the establishment of training-schools in these institutions was an encroachment upon our own territory, and rather

* Read by Miss S. L. Laird before the Third Annual Convention of the Nurses' Associated Alumnae of the United States, held at New York May 3, 4, and 5, 1900.

resented their existence, fearing perhaps that there would not be enough sick people to "go around." But I do not think we need to apprehend any serious interference from these graduates. Their work is of such a specific character and calls for such different methods that there is no reason to consider the two classes of schools as rivals at all, and I hope the time is near when they will feel a common interest in and tolerance for each other. When you realize that the State of New York is caring for over twenty thousand insane people in its State hospitals you will see there is no need to fear that there will not be enough of this class of patients to "go around," and they surely need all the help that can be given them, and by as skilful and careful nurses as can be obtained.

No class of afflicted people have been more generally neglected or misunderstood than the insane. From earliest times they have been feared, avoided, and only too often abused and ill-treated. Yet who is more in need of kind treatment and intelligent care than these often unhappy and miserable people? We extol and honor the nurse who devotes her life to the work of caring for those who are physically ill, but if you could watch the nurses of the insane among their patients, I think you would feel that no word of praise can be too high for those who are willing to give their time and strength to a sympathetic and conscientious effort to care for these unfortunates. To humor the many fancies and delusions; to understand the individual peculiarities; to control the excited and abusive; to keep the filthy and demented clean and tidy; to furnish each patient capable of it with work adapted to his or her comprehension, generally joining with him in the execution of it; many times on duty among the dangerous and vicious; almost always among the noisy and destructive; dealing with patients who need the care and attention given a child, but who retain all the duplicity and cunning gleaned in later years; with long hours and small wages, while in the hospitals, the wonder is that, in the face of so much that is wearing and repulsive, so many are willing to take its burdens upon them. It must be that, like our own work of nursing, it has another and a higher reward than that of mere pay.

Let us first consider the work of nursing the sick insane. Among the acute cases this does not differ as much from the work of caring for the general sick as you might suppose, for often delusions that are very troublesome in health disappear or are modified during an illness, and, thanks to our training-schools, skilful and intelligent care can be given. Still, many of the surgical cases will persist in removing their bandages and dressings, and if they are not constantly watched will pick out the stitches; and there is often a firm belief of poisoning

to contend with, which may prevent the administration of needed food and medicine. When this is persistent it is overcome by the method of tube-feeding, and many a patient would certainly have died without this care. A soft rubber tube is generally introduced through the nostril, and when skilfully done the act is attended with but little discomfort.

There may be difficulty in the simple taking of a patient's temperature, owing to the imagination of the patient. It is rarely safe to take it in either the mouth or rectum, so the axilla temperature is depended upon.

Many of these patients are insensible to heat or cold, so in using hot fomentations or counter-irritants this fact should be borne in mind by the nurse; again, there may be an over-sensitiveness, the patient shrinking from the least change in temperature, and becoming very impatient of any treatment of this kind; all of which require special and wise attention.

The autopsies tell strange stories, and show that many of the subjects were enduring great discomfort with no word from them to guide the physician towards their relief; though with some cases the dulness of perception mentioned before may have prevented them from suffering.

Again, there is a large proportion of the hypochondriacal among these people, and it is extremely difficult to decide which of the symptoms described are real and which are imagined. Here the work of the bacteriologist becomes invaluable, as the microscope is not apt to be "secretive" or to "hear voices," as a patient may.

These are but a few of the many difficulties which may confront a nurse caring for the sick insane, but I must leave this part of my subject and give you a mere sketch of the care of that other and larger class of patients, those who are physically as able to work and care for themselves as many people are, but who are mentally unfit for any life except that of some institution for the insane. Here is needed a form of care which we know little or nothing about, but which should receive as much attention and skill as the treatment of a surgical case or the giving of a temperature bath.

There are many facts that these attendants should bear in mind constantly. Charles K. Mills, the noted neurologist, gives us a brief but comprehensive statement of these: "That a case of melancholia would be likely to be suicidal or to starve to death; that one of mania is not infrequently homicidal or destructive; that one of monomania may exercise duplicity and for a time suppress his delusions; that a dement is likely to be filthy and not inclined to help himself at all;

that an insane epileptic may one moment be peaceful and serene, and the next in a most dangerous or motor-maniacal paroxysm; that the hysterical insane may make false or pseudo attempts at suicide."

Accidents are most likely to occur among the "general pareties" as they are called in the hospitals. These people, often having delusions of strength and grandeur, are likely to be troublesome and pugnacious, and so often have to be firmly handled. They are as a rule far from strong, weak hearts and degenerate livers and kidneys being common among them. Their bones are very brittle and not infrequently they have lung trouble. You can readily see that accidents of bone fracture or collapse would occur very frequently among these patients unless thought and intelligence were exercised by those caring for them.

Occupation is one of the greatest aids to recovery known among these cases, and many patients tell of the benefits they received from being placed at some regular or natural work. We find them employed everywhere in the State hospitals, on the farm, in the laundry and the shops, or doing the housework and sewing, as they may be most capable. And the attendant working with or guiding them, being advised of the different peculiarities of the patients under his supervision, is as much their nurse as if they were sick. He will have to watch the runaways, prevent the vicious from injuring each other, see that the delicate ones do not overwork, keep a careful lookout for knives or sharp implements, and even with some cases endeavor to prevent them from eating glass or pebbles—all of which may not be a very high grade of nursing, but which is very necessary among these people.

Amusement is of recognized importance, and a regular sum of money is allowed each hospital for this purpose. It is necessary for some attendants to be able to enter into these various forms of diversion, dancing, ball-playing, assisting at musical entertainments, using any talent they may possess or be able to acquire for the pleasure of these unfortunate people. Accomplishments that would be wholly unnecessary for a nurse in a general hospital are of the greatest benefit when used for the insane, and may be considered another form of nursing. "Substitution of thought" is as much to be desired in this work as for the cases of nervous prostration, and an attendant who is able to interest her patient in sewing or housework may be assisting in bringing about her recovery or improved condition.

My subject is far from exhausted, but I have exceeded the time allowed me. If I have aroused any interest in your hearts for those who are trying to "minister to the mind diseased," or increased your sympathy for those who are "sick and troubled with thick-coming fancies," my paper will have accomplished its mission.